

SUBCOMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND SPACE

Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Science, Technology and Space Subcommittee of the Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation be authorized to meet on Thursday, September 18, 1997, at 2:00 p.m. on International Space Station.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

COMMEMORATING HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

• Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, I rise today to honor one of the Nation's most vibrant communities: Hispanic-Americans, and join in celebrating September 15 through October 15, 1997, as Hispanic Heritage Month.

America is blessed with a wide variety of peoples and cultures. The Hispanic community, comprising cultures from Central and South America as well as Europe, has had an especially far-reaching impact on our Nation. From the arts and literature, to the sciences and business, the Hispanic community has helped shape America into a vibrant, dynamic society envied by the world.

It gives me great pleasure to acknowledge Hispanic Americans and their immigrant ancestors for their many significant and positive contributions to America. This country was built by immigrants—a great many of whom were of Hispanic descent. Hispanic individuals came to this country to seek opportunity, flee oppression, or find a better place to raise their families.

Many of these immigrants became successful in many disciplines, including business, education, entertainment, politics, and medicine. We know them, or their children or grandchildren, as pillars of our communities. And many immigrants went beyond the call of duty to serve their adopted homeland.

One such immigrant was Alfred Rascone, who immigrated to the United States from Mexico. At age 20, as a lawful permanent American resident, Mr. Rascone volunteered for military service in Vietnam as a paratrooper combat medic. On one fateful mission Mr. Rascone twice used his own body to shield wounded comrades from enemy guns. Severely wounded, he refused to be evacuated until all the wounded were safe. He kept tending the wounded until he collapsed, so hurt that a priest at the scene gave him last rites.

Mr. Rascone's comrades are to this day pursuing his proper recognition: the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Our Nation is much richer for having Alfred Rascone in it. He has the kind of character any American would do well to emulate. We can only gain by attracting more Alfred Rascones to our shores.

Across the Nation and in my home State of Michigan, events are taking place which demonstrate the rich Hispanic heritage in our country. These festivities will give every American the chance to participate in Hispanic culture. These events will educate, inform, and entertain, all with a distinctive cultural flair. Hispanic Heritage Month recognizes how important this community is to the United States, and I join my colleagues in looking forward to the many opportunities this month will provide.●

HALF THE WORLD'S POPULATION LIVES WITHOUT BASIC SANITATION

• Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, Senator MCCONNELL and I have worked this year to bring more attention and resources to combat infectious diseases, which afflict many millions of people around the world and pose a serious public health threat to Americans both here and abroad. The scope of this problem was illustrated in a July 23 article in the New York Times, about the UNICEF 1997 "Progress of Nations" report which revealed that nearly half of the world population does not have access to basic sanitation.

For most Americans, it is hard to fathom living without something as basic as a clean toilet. Yet over 2 million children die each year from diseases and diarrhea directly related to a lack of basic sanitation. Some of the countries with populations suffering from the worst sanitation problems, including Haiti and Cambodia, have received millions of dollars in United States and international aid. Addressing these basic needs should be a priority of our assistance programs in these countries.

Mr. President, the United States cannot fund the infrastructure to provide clean water and sanitary sewer systems for the 3 billion people in the world who currently lack such basic necessities. That is beyond our means or responsibilities. However, we should do all we can. The developing countries themselves are investing approximately \$200 billion a year on new infrastructure. The Agency for International Development is currently spending about \$44 million on urban infrastructure projects in parts of Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Eastern Europe, among other regions. This has shrunk from the \$150 million in loan guarantees that were available in 1993 for similar projects.

Epidemics that spread in unsanitary living conditions can and will become threats in the United States. Both the Senate and House fiscal year 1998 Foreign Operations appropriations bills provide additional money to combat infectious diseases. I am hopeful that with these additional resources, AID, the World Health Organization, the Center for Disease Control, and other government and international agencies and private organizations involved in

this effort, will be able to develop a coherent plan to expand research, provide training and medicines to public health officials, and help establish the global surveillance and response system necessary to combat these diseases.●

TELECOMMUNICATIONS SUMMIT

• Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, for many rural communities in my home State of New Mexico, the wonders and advantages of the telecommunications explosion—Internet, telecommuting, wireless communications—remain an unfulfilled promise. Yet, my recent 2-week trip throughout rural New Mexico showed me signs that the telecommunications revolution has begun to take hold in our State. As I continue to make rural economic development in New Mexico my top economic priority, through an innovative program that we call rural payday, full use of telecommunications will play a key role.

Highlighting the relationship between the telecommunications revolution and rural economic development was a full-day Telecommunications Summit we organized in Albuquerque last month. Organized under the auspices of the Small Business Advocacy Council of New Mexico, which I established 3 years ago, this summit brought together more than 200 telecommunications professionals, businessmen, and scientists from throughout our State. Key to this summit was the help provided by personnel from Sandia National Laboratory, who generously gave of their time, immense talent, and expertise throughout the planning period of the summit and during the day-long event.

What all of us learned from this summit can be summarized easily:

First, for rural small business owners, intelligent and creative use of telecommunications can mean the difference between survival and failure;

Second, the Telecommunications Act of 1996 will continue to play an unpredictable and major role as rural communities try to use telecommunications to solidify their economic futures;

Third, the large telecommunications, Internet and wireless providers must do more to help rural communities try to use telecommunications to solidify their economic futures;

Fourth, basic telecommunications infrastructure remains a serious obstacle to rural economic development in many areas;

Fifth, potential for economic development using telecommunications is limited only by the users' imaginations;

Sixth, the unique expertise of the national laboratories in New Mexico hold the potential to help spread economic development throughout our State and, by example, beyond the borders of our State.

During my trip in August, I saw many examples of how telecommunications helps small businesses thrive. Let me give you two examples.